



**Maybe stories  
are just data  
with a soul.**  
-Brene Brown

Data and numbers have a soul – and in our case, those numbers, charts, and graphs represent students' lived experiences on their pathway from high school to postsecondary success.

# Senior exit surveys are incredibly valuable in understanding how students are planning for the future.

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- ❖ Administered between May and June to understand senior plans and transitions
- ❖ Collect feedback to track knowledge, motivations, barriers, behaviors, and decisions related to college

**Surveys can provide counselors/college advisers and other school staff with insights into how to best support students based on their experiences at school.**

# As a result of Covid-19, exit surveys are important to combat summer melt and deferred college plans.

A typical year's exit survey investigates:



Post-secondary plans



School's college going culture



Influences on college selection



FAFSA registration and completion



Experience with college advising

This year's exit survey also includes Covid-19 experiences:



Personal impacts



Financial challenges



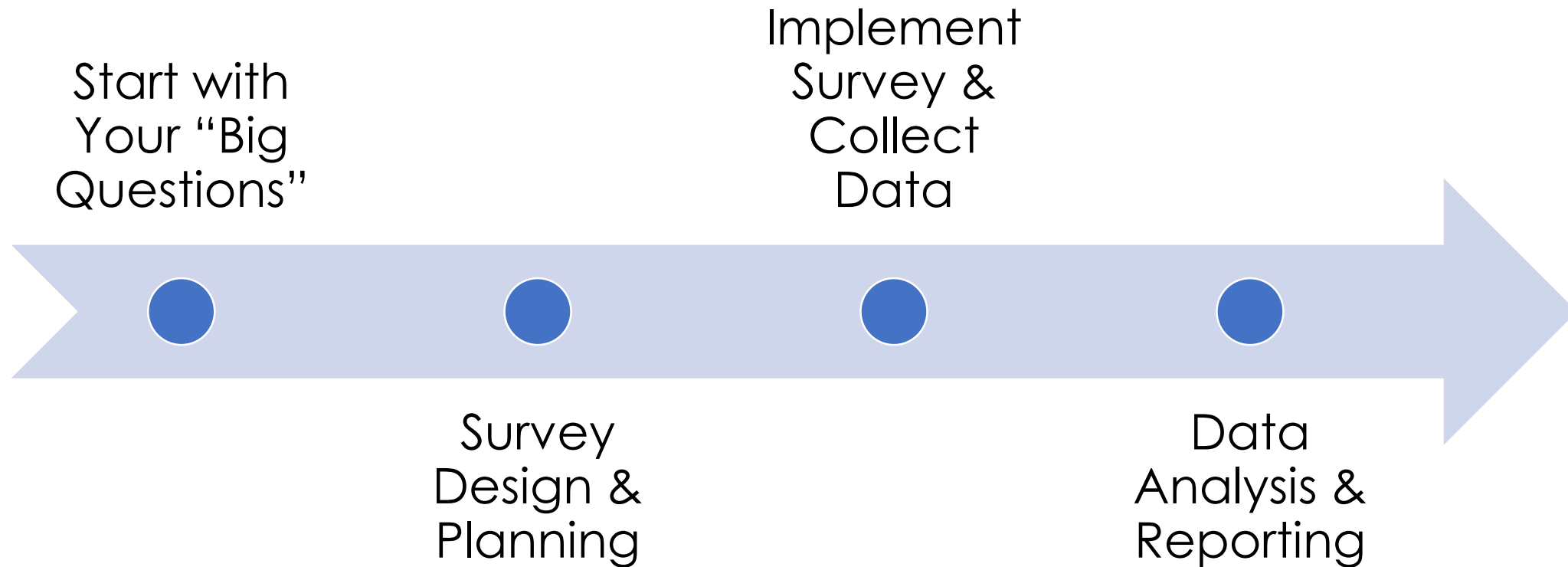
Academic challenges



Shifts in planned institution

# There are several steps involved with administering senior surveys.

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# Determine the answers to your “big questions.”

## What?

What do I want to learn?

What are the questions I want to answer?




What is the clearest, most direct language I can use to make response easy for students?

## Who?

Who is my target population?

What student subgroups must be represented?

# When designing questions, ensure they meet the below standards.

Content	Cognitive	Usability
<p>Are the questions asking about the right things to measure the right constructs?</p> <p></p> <p>* Did you complete the FAFSA or TASFA?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="radio"/> No</p>	<p>-Do respondents understand your questions?</p> <p>-Do they have the information required to answer them?</p> <p>-Are they willing and able to answer the questions?</p> <p></p> <p>Example: How important to you is a college's 4-year graduation rate in your consideration about where to attend?</p> <p>(Removed this question based on feedback that most students aren't following the question)</p>	<p>Can respondents complete the survey easily and as intended?</p> <p></p> <p>Example: breaking up large matrix-type questions into separate questions so that users don't have to scroll to the top to see column titles</p>

# Determine which question types will best address your ‘big questions’ and fit your analysis capacity

Open-ended

When you think about applying to college, which steps or activities could your college counselor help you complete? Your answer to this question will help your college counselor identify areas to focus on in your next meeting. Provide your ideas in the box below.

Select all that apply

Q2 What do you plan to do *next fall* after high school? (Mark all that apply)

- ☐ Work full-time
- ☐ Work part-time
- ☐ College full-time (2 or 4-year)
- ☐ College part-time (2 or 4-year)
- ☐ Join the military
- ☐ Trade/Vocational program
- ☐ I'm undecided

Multiple choice

Q21 Have you submitted a deposit to a college or university?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ I'm planning to attend a college that does not require a deposit

Likert scale

To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your school? Select one answer for each statement by filling in the corresponding circle.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
Classes at this school focus on helping students get ready for college.	0	0	0	0	0
There is at least one adult at my school who knows my plans after high school.	0	0	0	0	0
Teachers expect most students at my school to go to college.	0	0	0	0	0

# Administration methods that have worked in the past might need adjustment to reach students now.

Which strategies will reach the most students?

- Quick text polls
- Traditional survey (15-30 minutes to complete) administered via paper or online optimized for mobile completion
- Phone banks with recorded responses

What response rate gives you representative data?

- Typically recommend aiming for 70%
- How can you monitor subgroup completion to ensure missing data is not concentrated in specific populations?

Where and how can you promote the survey?

- On school instructional portals
- On postcards sent home to students
- Via personalized emails and texts from teachers, principals, counselors
- At meal pickup locations



# Paper-based and electronic surveys are common methods but each come with trade-offs.

## Paper

Budget considerations for printing + shipping costs, as well as software for design

Tracking of real-time completion updates is more difficult

Data need to be digitized for analysis – requires scanning and coding

Constraints on space limits skip logic/question types

Administration to students is typically easier

## Electronic

Budget considerations when choosing a survey platform

Real-time completion updates, but does take a bit of time to analyze

Data is collected in real time so no delay before analysis

Can be slightly shorter due to skip logic

Reaching all students is harder because of limitations to devices/Internet

# Making surveys available in multiple languages increases accessibility to students whose first language is not English.

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- ❖ Assess which languages are needed
  - ❖ In our schools, surveys were requested in Spanish, French, and Vietnamese
- ❖ Work with native speakers or a translation vendor to ensure accurate translations
- ❖ Implications for paper vs. electronic
  - ❖ Paper: factor in printing/shipping considerations for sending additional files in other languages
  - ❖ Electronic: some survey tools have built-in features to allow different languages but still export in English on the back end

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# APPENDIX

## Sample Covid-19 items

# Personal challenges

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Students everywhere are being affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The following questions seek to understand how you are experiencing the current disruption and uncertainty caused by Covid-19. As a reminder, your name will NOT be attached to any of your responses to the questions below. These questions are optional.

1. Have you experienced any of the following personal challenges because of Covid-19? Select all that apply.

- a) Someone I know became sick with Covid-19
- b) I lost or am unable to work my normal part-time job
- c) I lost or am unable to work my normal full-time job
- d) One of my family members lost or is unable to work their normal part-time job
- e) One of my family members lost or is unable to work their normal full-time job
- f) I have taken on additional employment
- g) I have taken on childcare responsibilities
- h) I have continued to work during this time because my role has been designated as an "essential worker"
- i) None of the above apply to me

# Change in planned institution

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5. As a result of Covid-19, which of the following circumstances apply to you? Select all that apply.

- a) I was considering going to a 4-year college, but am now considering attending 2-year school
- b) I was considering going to a more rigorous 4-year college, but am now considering a less rigorous 4-year college
- c) I was originally considering enrolling in college full-time, but am now considering enrolling part-time instead
- d) I was originally considering enrolling in college part-time, but am now considering enrolling full-time instead
- e) I was originally considering enrolling in college in the fall, but am now considering deferring my enrolment until fall 2021
- f) I was originally considering going to a 4-year college, but am now considering not going to college at all
- g) I was originally considering going to a 2-year college, but am now considering not going to college at all
- h) I was originally considering going into the workforce after high school, but am now considering enrolling in college instead
- i) None of the above apply to me

# Reasons for delaying or discontinuing college attendance

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8. How important are each of the below reasons in your decision to not go to college instead of attending the institution you originally considered?

RESPONSE OPTIONS:

Not at all important, Slightly important, Somewhat important, Moderately important, Very important

- a. I can no longer afford to pay for college
- b. I now need to work to support my family, who lost income and/or jobs
- c. I am unable to effectively anticipate or compare college costs due to delayed release of financial aid awards from institutions
- d. I am unable to complete college campus visits where I was accepted
- e. Other, please specify:



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